

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday March 12th 2006

New IRTS Web Site

IRTS is pleased to announce that its web site has been re-designed and extended. The new site - still at the same address www.irts.ie - includes a number of additional features that should be of interest to existing members and to those who want to know more about amateur radio. For existing members, we have, for example, a new "Contests" section, a wide range of links to other amateur radio sites and many new files available for download. As a matter of interest, the downloads section includes the revised IARU Region 1 HF Band Plan, which came into effect on 1st of January 2006, and which should be of interest to existing operators as well as to those studying for the theory exam.

Especially for newcomers and for anyone just browsing around, the Home Page incorporates a description of amateur radio and of the role of IRTS, while there is also a page on the site explaining what is involved in getting an experimenter's licence. A feature of the site is the inclusion of photographs of radio amateurs in action; these photographs change on a daily basis.

Joe Ryan EI7GY, who designed the new site, said "Web sites are not set in stone, and can be easily modified and extended. Please let me have your suggestions for additional features, and also let me know if any of the content is out of date or otherwise needs to be changed".

Commenting on the new site, the Society's President Sean Donelan EI4GK, said that the launch of the new site was an important development for the Society, which should benefit existing members, encourage others to take up the hobby, and raise the profile of the Society. He referred to the fact that the web is now an important communications medium for many of us and, fortunately for the Society, a very effective and economical way of keeping in touch with our members and encouraging others to take up amateur radio.

Awards

It's time again to call for nominations for the various awards and trophies presented on merit at the IRTS A.G.M. for service to the Society or to Amateur Radio.

Clubs and individuals are asked for nominations of suitable persons to the Awards Committee. Please be reminded that there are two awards for constructions and an

award for the SWL contest. Nominations to Peter Grant EI4HX, Chair Awards Committee @ QTHR or to “ei4hxperimental at eircom dot net” Nominees must be full Current members of IRTS!

Those currently holding trophies awarded at last years AGM are asked to return them by the 18th of March.

IRTS AGM 2006

The IRTS AGM, which is being held on Sunday April 23rd at the Vienna Woods Hotel in Cork and is being hosted by Cork Radio Club. The weekend will follow the usual format with a dinner on the Saturday night, a rally on Sunday and the Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday afternoon. The Vienna Woods Hotel is located on the eastern side of Cork City just off the Glanmire roundabout at the city side of Glanmire village.

Cork Radio Club

The Cork Amateur Radio Repeater Group will hold the AGM on Wednesday next, the 15th March at the SMA Hall Wilton at 8 p.m. All members and potential new members are requested to attend, The SMA Hall is close to the church in Wilton.

SR4TEN Beacon

The first Polish 10 metre band beacon was activated at 10.15 UTC on the 6th of March 2006. SR4TEN is located at the office of the MK QTC Magazine in Suchacz (JO94RG). It operates with the power of 3 Watts at 28.203 MHz. If you copy the beacon, please mail your report to: “qtc at post dot pl”.

AREN Training

Following Februarys Introduction to Emergency Situations, March’s on air session will focus on ARENs response to such an emergency. It will describe the upcoming field exercise “Operation Blackwater” and prepare members for the event. The exercise, which takes place in April, will address specific communications issues encountered by some of the emergency services last year during a simulated major accident on the N25. This is an opportunity for members to test their readiness to deploy in an on site-situation.

The on air training session will take place on the 25th of March at 0930 hrs using the primary frequency of 3.690 MHz and secondary of 7.099 MHz. The subsequent field exercise will be held on April the 15th next.

South Dublin Radio Club

A Special Event will take place over Easter weekend to mark the 1916 90th Anniversary Commemoration. The station will run from the SDR club QTH using the callsign EI90GPO. Activity will be on all HF bands from 80 metres to 10 metres.

Northern Ireland Yahoo Group

There is a new Northern Ireland amateur radio Yahoo group as an alternative to NI Hams and RealOps. The group has been in existence for one week and already has a membership base of 68 members. It sets out to present the positive side of amateur radio in Northern Ireland. Membership applications from EI stations are most welcome. For more information visit groups.yahoo.com/group/NornIronRadio

DXpedition 2007

Following the request for 'expressions of interest' in an IRTS DXpedition to Southern Africa as part of the 75th Jubilee celebrations, 15 EIs and GIs responded. Over the next month, based on feedback received, more detailed planning will take place, however it is evident that there is considerable interest in Contest operation, so it is likely that the trip will be planned to coincide with either the ARRL DX SSB Contest or the CQWW WPX SSB Contest.

Club Details

All member club secretaries were asked recently to provide an update of their club details, including meeting venue and dates, activities and web site address. Many thanks to those club secretaries who have already responded: those who have yet to respond are asked to do so as soon as possible. Any club secretary who has not received a letter from the Society about this should contact Joe Ryan EI7GY "jryan at iol dot ie".

Solar Minima

We're at the beginning of the solar-minima. February was the first month in almost ten years with mostly no sunspots. For 21 days last month, the sun remained blank. This absence of solar activity indicates that we have reached solar minimum. The situation is expected to continue for the rest of 2006.

No sunspots means low solar activity. Sunspots are sources of solar flares and coronal mass ejections affect radio communications and even cause power outages on Earth during severe magnetic storms. Auroras, which are a side effect of magnetic storms, will most likely subside along with the solar activity. During solar minimum however, we can expect occasional sunspots and solar flares.

New Digital Reporting Format

There is a proposal to replace RST signal reporting with a different format for use with digital modes.

The IARU Region 1 Conference in September 2005 recommended that RSQ (Readability, Strength, Quality) replace the traditional RST reporting format for HF digital modes. This new format provides an opportunity for operators to give more meaningful signal reports when for example operating the popular PSK31 mode and is destined to become part of the Region 1 HF Managers Handbook.

The RSQ report description, IARU recommendation and other supporting information including articles and news can be found at rsq-info.net.

A dedicated RSQ Yahoo Group has also been established to facilitate further discussion and debate. To receive the latest news and articles on the RSQ reporting project please join the mailing list at the above site.

Items for inclusion in next weeks Radio News should be forwarded to Mark Wall, EI7IS at QTHR or by phone to 087 6302026. Items for the radio news can also be faxed to 087 5 6302026. News should be submitted via e-mail to "news at irts dot ie" for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. Please note that items for the radio news should reach the editor no later than midday on Fridays.

[C]